

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Program Element		FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Enacted	FY 2007			Change From 2006 (+/-)
				Fixed Costs & Related Changes (+/-)	Program Changes (+/-)	Budget Request	
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	\$(000)	46,982	50,151	+411	-7,901	42,660	-7,491
	FTE	231	231		+2	233	+2

Summary of FY 2007 Program Changes for Partners for Fish and Wildlife
Request Component

Program Changes	Amount	FTE
• General Program Activities	+982	0
• Lower Klamath Basin Restoration	+1,980	+2
• Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Cons. Strategy, WY	+495	0
• Gray Wolf Monitoring, ID and MT	+800	0
• Vermont Natural Heritage Partners	-99	0
• Nutria Eradication at Blackwater NWR, MD	-493	0
• Lake Sakakawea (ND) Invasive Species (Friends of)	-99	0
• Hawaii Bird Conservation (San Diego Zoo)	-542	0
• Nevada Biodiversity Research & Cons. Project	-1,231	0
• Montana Cold Water Fish	-493	0
• Big Hole Watershed Montana	-690	0
• NH Audubon Society/Lake Umbagog NWR study	-419	0
• Thunder Basin Grasslands Initiative, WY	-147	0
• Georgia Streambank Restoration	-493	0
• PA Watershed (Tunkhannock & Bowman's Creeks)	-739	0
• Wildlife Enhancement - Starkville, MS	-985	0
• Technical Assistance - NJ Meadowlands	-177	0
• Susquehanna Fish Passage, PA	-493	0
• Susquehanna Headlands/Wetlands	-493	0
• AK GIS of NWRs by non-govt organization	-493	0
• Conservation work at Don Edwards/San Fran NWR	-532	0
• WA Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups	-1,379	0
• Environmental Data Quality and Access (WA Salmon Recovery)	-690	0
• Colorado River Flow and Aquatic Habitat Study	-394	0
• Seattle, WA shoreline restoration for salmon	-985	0
• Program Management Savings	-93	0
TOTAL, Program Changes	-7,901	+2

Justification of 2007 Program Changes

General Program Activities (+ \$982,000)

Total Performance Change					
	A	B	C	D=B+C	E
Overall Performance Change from 2006 to 2007					
Measure: Acres achieving desired condition.	2006 Enacted Performance	2007 Base Performance	2007 Impact of Program Change on Performance	2007 Budget Request Performance	Out-year Impact of 2007 Program Change on Performance
Wetland Acres Restored	26,159	26,159	273	26,432	0
Upland Acres Restored	247,585	247,585	2,472	250,057	0
Riparian & Stream Miles Restored	561	561	-32	529	0
Acres Treated for Invasive Species	60,283	60,283	450	60,733	0
Number of Landowner Agreements	2,500	2,500	25	2,525	0
Column B: The performance level expected to be achieved absent the program change (i.e., at the 2006 request level plus/minus funded fixed costs/related changes); this would reflect, for example, the impact of prior year funding changes, management efficiencies, absorption of fixed costs, and trend impacts.					
Column E: The out-year impact is the change in performance level expected in 2008 and Beyond of ONLY the requested program budget change; it does <u>not</u> include the impact of receiving these funds again in a subsequent outyear.					

The Service has established national priorities for FY 2007 that include supporting the recovery of listed species, increasing aquatic habitat restoration, and increasing cooperative efforts with USDA to assist in the implementation of their conservation programs. This increase will allow the Partners Program to accelerate progress toward long-term habitat restoration goals by increasing the number of on-the-ground habitat restoration projects. Partners Program staff will work with federal, state and other partners to identify opportunities to use Farm Bill conservation programs for stream restoration and other aquatic habitat restoration projects identified through the National Fish Habitat Initiative. Partners Program biologists will also continue to serve as a bridge to owners of land adjacent to or affecting National Wildlife Refuges to complement activities on refuge lands, contribute to the resolution of problems that are caused by off-refuge practices, and reduce habitat fragmentation between refuges.

The additional base funds will be used to expand the Secretary's Cooperative Conservation Initiative with private landowners in priority geographic focus areas to achieve the most effective and efficient use of program resources. Projects initiated with the additional funding will be responsive to priorities established in the Partners Program National Strategic Plan and produce results that can be reported under one or more performance measures of the DOI Strategic Plan. A primary benefit will be additional landowner agreements that will strengthen the role of citizens in the public/private natural resource conservation partnership. The Partners Program will continue to serve as an on-the-ground broker in merging needs and opportunities for the benefit of trust species.

These funds will contribute significantly to the achievement of long-term Service and DOI performance goals, and the elimination of the unrelated activities in the current budget will not affect performance goals. The Partners Program will focus new landowner partnerships in priority geographic areas

identified in the Partners Program Strategic Plan and emerging community-based habitat conservation plans.

In addition to providing benefits for the nation's fish and wildlife resources, these initiatives stretch the federal dollar by leveraging non-Service funding at an average rate of 1:1. Projects are community-based, developed in conjunction with local planning efforts and utilize voluntary stewardship partnerships, thus supporting the President's Management Agenda and Secretary Norton's four C's – Cooperation, Consultation, and Communication all in the service of Conservation.

Performance Results

The increase will enable the program to add approximately 25 additional partnerships to the 2,500 anticipated base funded partnerships. At the requested funding level, the Service will restore an additional 273 acres of priority wetland, 2,472 acres of priority grassland and upland habitat, and 5.5 miles of degraded stream and riparian habitat. In addition, the program will help landowners remove 1 additional barrier to fish passage that will provide fish access to important spawning and rearing habitat. Examples of projects which could be funded with the requested increase include:

- Invasive species control, Florida: The Partners Program, in Florida, will work cooperatively to control or eliminate invasive and exotic species (e.g., Brazilian pepper, melaleuca, climbing fern, and potato vine) that are threatening native habitats and the federally-listed species that live there. Estimated accomplishment outputs include up to 3,000 acres of uplands, 200 acres of wetlands, and one mile of riparian protection involving approximately 20 private landowners. Habitat improvement activities include the use of controlled burning, herbicides, and mechanical methods to control or eliminate invasive species; construction of wetland areas and restoring hydrology by blocking drainage; selective planting of native vegetation; and fencing and revegetation of riparian areas. Numerous federally-listed and other species of concern will benefit from these projects, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, eastern Indigo snake, gopher tortoise, grasshopper sparrow, Florida panther, Florida scrub jay, bald eagle, key deer, keys marsh rabbit, wood stork, piping plover, a variety of sea turtles, and migratory birds.

Partners include:
 USDA - NRCS
 FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
 Florida Depar. of Environmental Protection
 Archbold Biological Station Collier County
 Seacamp
 The Nature Conservancy
 City governments
- In Nebraska, the Partners Program will enter into new agreements with private landowners along the central Platte River to control and manage invasive species and restore riverine wetlands and native grasslands. To date, this ongoing project encompasses an 80 miles area and approximately 4,000 acres of riverine floodplain habitat (wetland, grassland, riverine and riparian) have been restored and enhanced, including the restoration of approximately 6 miles of riverine backwater and slough habitat, and the restoration and maintenance of approximately 11 miles of riverine roosting habitat. Riverine and wetland restoration along the central Platte River helps achieve local, national and international goals in the preservation of migratory bird habitat and in the protection of federally listed threatened and endangered species such as the whooping crane, least tern, and piping plover. Efforts to recruit new partners and restore additional habitat will continue in FY 2007.

Partners include:
 USDA - NRCS
 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 Nebraska Environmental Trust
 National Audubon Society
 The Nature Conservancy
 Ducks Unlimited
 Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust
 Crane Meadows Nature Center

Lower Klamath Basin (+\$1,980,000, +2 FTEs)

Total Performance Change					
	A	B	C	D=B+C	E
Overall Performance Change from 2006 to 2007					
Measure	2006 Enacted Performance	2007 Base Performance	2007 Impact of Program Change on Performance	2007 Budget Request Performance	Out-year Impact of 2007 Program Change on Performance
Wetland Acres Restored	750	750	850	1600	0
Upland Acres Restored	80	80	62	142	0
Riparian & Stream Miles Restored	20	20	19	39	0
Fish Passage Barriers Removed	5	5	2	7	0
Number of Landowner Agreements	5	5	1	6	0
Column B: The performance level expected to be achieved absent the program change (i.e., at the 2006 request level plus/minus funded fixed costs/related changes); this would reflect, for example, the impact of prior year funding changes, management efficiencies, absorption of fixed costs, and trend impacts.					
Column E: The out-year impact is the change in performance level expected in 2008 and Beyond of ONLY the requested program budget change; it does <u>not</u> include the impact of receiving these funds again in a subsequent outyear.					

According to the Federally sponsored report “Endangered and Threatened Fishes in the Klamath River Basin: Causes of Decline and Strategies for Recovery” prepared by the National Research Council, the principal operating arm of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering, the federal government should be putting more resources into removing fish migration obstacles, improving habitat, and reducing summer water temperatures in tributaries, e.g., restoring shady streamside habitat. Ongoing Service sponsored watershed restoration activities in the Klamath Basin emphasize on-the-ground habitat restoration, fish passage improvement, assessment/monitoring, and outreach/public education projects leading to improved water quality and timing of release of water for the benefit of trust species while meeting the needs of local communities. Specific on-the-ground activities include erecting fences to control cattle grazing, excavating swales to reconnect oxbows to the river, planting native trees and shrubs for shade and stream bank stabilization, and projects to achieve sediment reduction. These projects directly restore habitats for the federally threatened coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey.

The requested increase will enable the Service to provide additional technical assistance and continue to work with partners and stakeholders developing and implementing conservation projects to ensure long-term local economic health and fish and wildlife conservation. The Service will work cooperatively with private landowners and tribes in the Klamath Basin to restore 850 acres of wetland, 62 acres of upland, 19 miles of stream and riparian, and remove 2 fish passage barriers.

The following are examples of projects that will be implemented with the additional funds:

- In California, the Service will work with local ranchers, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the California Conservation Corps to restore two critical salmon streams entering the lower Klamath River. The project involves fencing to exclude cattle from 6 acres of riparian corridor and a 45-acre off-channel wetland, and planting of native trees and shrubs. Both Salt and Hunter Creeks

have been identified as regionally significant for the federally listed coho salmon. They also support populations of steelhead, Chinook salmon, and coastal cutthroat trout, and beavers and breeding amphibians. The riparian revegetation component of the project will also provide breeding and stopover habitat for migratory songbirds. The project will restore a functional stream corridor, benefiting a wide variety of aquatic and riparian-dependent species.

- In the Mid-Klamath River area in California, the Service will work with local landowners, area Resource Conservation Districts, local watershed councils, Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service and Klamath National Forest, and California Department of Fish and Game, to restore anadromous fish habitats in the Shasta, Scott, and Salmon Rivers (major tributaries to the Klamath), as well as in the main stem Klamath River and its smaller tributaries. Restoration projects will be implemented to improve fish passage, reduce sediment input, restore streamside habitats used by fish, and restore functional stream corridors to improve water quality and enhance anadromous (migratory) fish populations. These rivers and streams are important to the recovery of threatened coho salmon and provide most of the breeding and juvenile rearing habitats used by Chinook salmon, steelhead, and other anadromous fishes in the Klamath Basin.

FTEs: Two new FTEs are needed to provide the technical assistance and customer service associated with this increase.

Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy (+\$495,000)

In FY 2006, Congress provided funding (\$1.1 million) within the Endangered Species Recovery budget to support the Service's efforts to move forward and de-list the grizzly bear in the Yellowstone Ecosystem. Delisting the Yellowstone grizzly bear requires demonstration of adequate regulatory mechanisms. Eleven federal and state agencies have signed the Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy, which is the long-term mechanism providing both the regulatory framework as well as the post-delisting monitoring required by the Endangered Species Act for delisting species. In November 2005, the Service proposed the delisting.

In FY 2007, the Service and the National Park Service will jointly support the de-listing process for the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The additional funding will be used to write a management plan that will include discussions regarding monitoring the bears' food supply, hunter activity and impact, human/bear conflicts, livestock/bear conflicts; and adaptive management of the population as needed.

Gray Wolf Monitoring in Idaho and Montana (+\$800,000)

In FY 2006, Congress provided funding within the Endangered Species Recovery budget for gray wolf monitoring in Idaho (\$719,000) and Montana (\$315,000) to support the Service's efforts to move forward and de-list the Rocky Mountain population of gray wolf. In January 2006, the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor of Idaho signed a Memorandum of Agreement transferring most of the responsibility for managing gray wolves in central Idaho from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to state wildlife officials. Transferring much of management responsibility at this time will help facilitate an orderly transition from federal management to state management and will further enhance the conservation of the gray wolf by allowing the state to gain valuable management experience. In FY 2007, the requested funds will be provided to the States of Idaho and Montana (\$400,000 to each) to assist them in assuming management responsibilities for the gray wolf in those states, including:

- Implementing control actions for problem wolves consistent with the goals and policies outlined in the States' management plans;
- Relocating wolves to avoid human conflicts;

- Taking wolves for scientific purposes, such as research; and
- Other wolf management field functions relating to the experimental, non-essential population of gray wolves such as trapping, collaring, and taking blood and hair samples.

Vermont Natural Heritage Partners (-\$99,000)

The reintroduction of bald eagles is not consistent with the mission of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and is being eliminated. These activities can be funded through other sources such as the Private Stewardship Grant Program and other grant programs. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Nutria Eradication at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Maryland (-\$493,000)

In FY 2006, the Service funded this activity with \$690,000 from base funds, which was equal to the FY 2005 enacted funding level. Congress also provided an additional \$498,000 bringing total FY 2006 funding for this activity to \$1,198,000. This change returns the funding to \$690,000 for nutria eradication on private lands through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The Service will continue to conduct this activity at this funding level with General Program Activity base funds.

Friends of Lake Sakakawea, North Dakota, Invasive Species Control (-\$99,000)

In FY 2005 and FY 2006 funds were passed through to a local organization to control noxious weed problems adjacent to Lake Sakakawea made worse by low water levels. This project is eligible for consideration for funding through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife's normal competitive processes as well as grant programs such as the Private Stewardship Grant. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Endangered Bird Conservation in Hawaii in Cooperation with the Zoological Society of San Diego (-\$542,000)

FY 2006 funding was a pass through to the Zoological Society of San Diego to support efforts to increase the numbers of Alala, Puaiohi, and Maui Parrotbill in captivity at the Keauhou and Maui Bird Conservation Centers in order to protect species genetic diversity and to provide genetically diverse founder populations for release in the wild. This funding also supported continuation of the reintroduction program for Puaiohi to the Alakai Wilderness, Kauai, and the reintroduction of Maui Parrotbill on Maui, and Nene captive breeding. These activities are not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and are being eliminated. Any habitat restoration components of this project are eligible for consideration for funding through normal competitive processes. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Nevada Biodiversity Research (-\$1,231,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to the University of Nevada for GIS mapping of biodiversity "hotspots," a vegetative data base of rare plants; stream assessments; Lahontan cutthroat trout genetic analysis; spotted frog assessments; Walker Lake ecosystem studies; and sage grouse, pygmy rabbit, Sand Mountain blue butterfly, and Apache silverspot butterfly surveys and monitoring. This program is not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. Alternative funding sources more suitable to this initiative include State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, Private Stewardship incentive grants, and research funds available through other agencies and organizations. This research program does not contribute to the goals of the DOI strategic

plan and elimination of this program will have no effect on the Service's ability to contribute to the DOI plan.

Montana Cold Water Fish (-\$493,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget for the Montana Water Center at Montana State University to evaluate the success of riparian habitat enhancement projects. There is no linkage between this program and the voluntary habitat restoration efforts on private lands promoted by the Service. Other sources of assistance for this type of research are available including the Service's Sport Fish Restoration Grants, and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Big Hole Watershed, Montana (-\$690,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to the Big Hole Watershed Committee to conduct on-the-ground projects benefiting fluvial arctic grayling. This project has components beyond voluntary habitat restoration on private lands and therefore is not consistent with the mission of the Partners Program. Those components of the project that involve habitat restoration are eligible for consideration for funding through normal competitive processes of the Partners Program and other programs such as the Landowner Incentive Program and Private Stewardship Grants. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

New Hampshire Audubon Society and Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge Study (-\$419,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to the New Hampshire Audubon Society to study the declining wildlife populations on the Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. This program is not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. Research, studies, and similar activities not directly involving actual habitat restoration work are eligible for funding from a variety of sources within the Service and other agencies. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Thunder Basin Grassland Initiative, Wyoming (-\$147,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association to identify Thunder Basin landscape habitat needs and management actions in Wyoming. The Service is not requesting funding for this project because it is eligible for consideration through normal competitive processes. Previous funding has supported mapping and ecosystem plan development but no on-the-ground habitat restoration. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Georgia Stream Bank Restoration (-\$493,000)

In prior years, funds were passed through the Service to the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission for work primarily consisting of fencing livestock out of stream channels. The Service is not seeking funding in FY2007 because projects of this nature are eligible for consideration for funding through existing Partners Program funding mechanisms in Georgia. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Pennsylvania Watershed Restoration (Tunkhannock and Bowman's Creeks) (-\$739,000)

FY 2006 funding was provided for assessment and in-stream restoration efforts in the Tunkhannock and Bowman's Creek watersheds. Funding for these activities is available through normal competitive processes and from other sources such as the Private Stewardship Grant Program, and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Wildlife Enhancement, Starkville, Mississippi (-\$985,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to Mississippi State University to provide educational programs to assist landowners and wildlife managers. This program is not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. Funding for these activities will continue to be available through other sources such as the Private Stewardship Grant Program, Landowner Incentive Program, cost-sharing programs, and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Technical Assistance New Jersey Meadowlands (-\$177,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget for habitat conservation efforts in Hachensack Meadowlands. The Service is not requesting funding for this program in FY 2007 because the Vision Plan for the Meadowlands is complete and outlines goals and tasks to be accomplished for wildlife at the Meadowlands. The State and other organizations can now pursue funding to implement these tasks through normal competitive funding mechanisms of Federal or Service programs such as the State and Tribal wildlife grants or Private Stewardship Grant Programs. Eliminating the funding for the Meadowlands will have no effect on the outcome goals of the DOI strategic plan.

Susquehanna Fish Passage, Pennsylvania (-\$493,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget for completing engineering designs, establishing cost and material estimates, hydraulic model testing for fishways on three dams of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, and supporting construction initiation of two dams. Funding for this activity is available through other programs such as the Fish Passage Program, the Service's Sport Fish Restoration Grants, and State and Tribal Grants. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Susquehanna River Headwaters Multiple Use Wetlands, New York (-\$493,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget for designing and constructing multiple-use wetland projects in the Susquehanna River flood plain. This activity is eligible for consideration for funding through normal competitive process of the Private Stewardship Grant Program, Landowner Incentive Program, and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The Service is already working cooperatively with local watershed associations, the State, USDA, and other partners and stakeholders to restore conditions in priority wetlands in New York. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Alaska GIS Mapping of National Wildlife Refuges by a Non-governmental Organization (-\$493,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget to write contract specification, call for bids, and perform GIS collection and modeling on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska. This program is not

consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Conservation Work at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, California (-\$532,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget to hire a biologist to manage salt ponds on the refuge. Funding for this position is now included in the NWR budget for this facility. This program is also not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program. Eliminating this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Washington Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (-\$1,379,000)

Funding was provided in the Service's FY 2006 budget as a pass through to the Washington Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups for salmon recovery efforts, habitat restoration, and salmon hatchery projects and monitoring. This program is not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. In the future, funding for individual projects sponsored by these regional enhancement groups may be obtained through the Service and other Federal Agency's grants, providing the projects address identified agency priorities. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Environmental Data Quality and Access for the Washington Salmon Recovery Effort (-\$690,000)

Funding was provided to the Service in FY 2006 for determining the feasibility of creating a repository for environmental and habitat management data for each Washington State Salmon recovery region. This program is not consistent with the purpose and mission of the Partners Program, and is being eliminated. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Colorado River Flow and Aquatic Habitats Study from Longhorn Dam to Matagorda Bay (-\$394,000)

Funding was provided to the Service in FY 2006 as a pass through to the Lower Colorado River Authority to study the relationships between river flow regimes and the native aquatic fauna through activities such as fish tagging and tracking. This study is not consistent with the mission of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and this activity is eligible for consideration for funding through the normal competitive process of grant programs such as the State and Tribal Grants program, Private Stewardship Grants program, and Landowner Incentive Program. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Seattle Washington, Shoreline Restoration for Salmon (-\$985,000)

FY 2006 funding level to support this voluntary habitat conservation work is not requested in FY 2007 because this activity is eligible for funding through normal competitive processes of the Partners Program, Coastal Program, National Coastal Wetland Grants Program, State and Tribal Grants, Landowner Incentive Program, Recovery Program funds, Private Stewardship Grants and other programs. Elimination of this funding will allow the Service to address other high priority resource needs and opportunities while having no measurable effect on the Service's contributions to the DOI Strategic Plan.

Program Management Savings (-\$92,808)

To enable the Service to address its highest priorities during constrained fiscal times, the Service proposes reducing program administrative funding by \$1,980,000. Using Activity Based Cost information and

other budgetary analyses, the Service anticipates achieving a savings of \$92,808 in Partners in Fish and Wildlife. These savings will be realized by streamlining program administrative support activities.

Program Overview

The President's Management Agenda calls for a cooperative conservation approach to support citizen-centered stewardship of our Nation's natural resources. This vision, as articulated in Executive Order 13352, "Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation," signed August 26, 2004, calls for coordinated Federal actions in concert with local priorities and actions in concert with local priorities and with respect for "the interests of persons with ownership ...in land and other natural resources."

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has established a solid foundation for working directly with landowners and communities to restore important fish and wildlife habitats through non-regulatory processes. Field biologists provide technical assistance, help landowners find sources of funding and support them through the permitting process, as necessary. This personal attention has led to national recognition and wide support. This proven approach also helps reduce the reliance on regulation and results in increased efficiency and cost savings in implementing on-the-ground habitat conservation projects for the benefit of federal trust species.

At the heart of the Service's mission is the conservation of the Nation's trust species -threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, inter-jurisdictional fish, certain marine mammals, and species of international concern. The Partners Program sustains federal trust species on private land by building cost-effective, voluntary, and durable partnerships. Our strategy is to maintain existing partnerships and to recruit new partners and then work directly with them to conserve and restore priority fish and wildlife habitats through on-the-ground activities.

We recognize that not all habitat restoration projects are equal in terms of benefits. The Program takes steps to focus and direct work to priority habitats where we can achieve significant measurable improvements. Projects include wetland restoration, stream restoration, native grass and woodland restoration in a variety of sizes and with varying levels of complexity. The Program will also work with the new National Fish Habitat Initiative to assist in restoration of priority aquatic habitats.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program achieves mission results through performance-based management in conformance with the DOI Strategic Plan:

- The Partners Program held stakeholder meetings across the country as part of its strategic planning process. Both stakeholder input and recommendations from a FY2003 Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review, called for the program to sharpen its attention on the identification of geographic focus areas in which to concentrate its resources. In FY2007, the program will have completed the Strategic Plan and established a national system of focus areas for restoration work.
- Activity Based Costing was implemented in FY 2004. This reporting will assist Partners Program managers make more efficient use of appropriated funds and insure program priorities are being pursued.

The Partners Program is guided by national policy (Service Manual Chapters on Land Use and Management 504 FW 1-5 and Chapter 640 FW 1 on Interagency Activities) that identifies these program objectives:

- Promote and implement habitat improvement projects that benefit federal trust species
- Provide conservation leadership and promote partnerships
- Encourage public understanding and participation

- Work with USDA to implement USDA's conservation programs.

The national habitat priorities we identify represent what the Service, in coordination with thousands of partners and stakeholders, deem most critical to benefit the fish and wildlife species we are entrusted to conserve. We step down these priorities to on-the-ground project planning and implementation, and use a series of national, regional and local filters to help focus our efforts. These conservation partnerships create opportunities for leveraging financial and human resources to enhance restoration outcomes and to incorporate cost efficiencies. The program will continue to use collaborative and innovative partnerships to effectively leverage resources (financial and other) at an average ratio of 2:1 (Federal to Non-Federal dollars) to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities

As of FY 2005, the Partners Program has worked with more than 37,000 landowners and 2,600 organizations to voluntarily restore wetlands, streams, grasslands, woodlands and other important habitats that support fish and wildlife. Partnering organizations are comprised of other federal agencies, states, non-government organizations, municipalities, conservation districts, private landowners and others. To date, we have worked with these partners to:

- Restore 753,000 acres of vital wetlands habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and amphibians.
- Restore 1,867,000 acres of native grasslands and woodlands for declining grassland nesting birds and cavity dwellers such as woodpeckers.
- Restore 6,806 miles of stream and riparian (stream-side) habitat for native fish, songbirds, amphibians, and mammals.

The Partners Program supports the DOI Strategic Goal of *Resource Protection by working cooperatively with partners to improve the health of watersheds, landscapes and marine resources by restoring and maintaining proper function to waters and landscapes, which in-turn helps sustain biological communities*. In FY 2006, the Program will complete its Strategic Plan. The Plan will guide the program towards (1) clearly defined national and regional habitat goals, (2) improved accountability for Federal dollars expended in support of the program and its goals, (3) enhanced communication to achieve greater responsiveness to local plans and conservation priorities, and (4) an expanded commitment to serving additional partners. The program will also continue to sharpen its focus on scientifically-supported, collaboratively-established focus areas to deliver its assistance.

All of these restoration activities will be conducted through voluntary landowner agreements designed to incorporate habitat restoration into working farms and ranches and other private lands.

2007 Program Performance Estimates

In FY 2007, the Service will work with approximately 2,525 private landowners to restore priority fish and wildlife habitat throughout the nation. Through voluntary landowner agreements, the Program will restore 28,032 acres of wetland, 250,199 acres of grassland and woodland habitat, 568 miles of stream and riparian habitat, and remove 46 fish passage barriers (small dams and culverts).

Using a web-based Service priorities GIS system developed in FY 2006, the Program will focus project implementation in areas identified by Service programs (i.e., Endangered Species) as well as State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies as priority areas for private lands restoration. Consolidated efforts will be made to concentrate program efforts in Service focus areas in order to make a measurable beneficial impact on federal trust species populations. Also, the program will continue to effectively coordinate and leverage resources from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through their Farm Bill conservation programs.

Recovery of imperiled species – The program will continue its highly effective non-regulatory approach of working with private landowners to restore important habitats that benefit the recovery of imperiled species (threatened, endangered, and candidate species). The Service places a priority on projects that will lead to the recovery of imperiled species. In fact, the priority is so high in the Southwest Region that the Partners Program has taken on the duties of administering the Private Stewardship Grant Program which is a grant program for on-the-ground projects for listed species. Approximately 2/3 of the Private Stewardship Grants are delivered through the Partners Program.

An emphasis on listed species extends across the country. For example, the Southwestern region focuses its efforts and implementation projects on the lesser prairie-chicken, black-tailed prairie dog, Arkansas River shiner, and swift fox along with other species. The Northeast Region, is working one-on-one with private landowners to restore and enhance habitat for several endangered mussels, the Indiana bat, and the bog turtle.

Aquatic Habitat Restoration – In FY 2007, aquatic habitat restoration projects continue to be a priority for the Service. In cooperation with hundreds of private landowners, the USDA, multiple non-governmental organizations, state and local governments, the Partners program implemented more than 475 aquatic projects (in FY 2004 and FY 2005) and restored or enhanced over 1,000 miles of river and stream habitat across the nation. These aquatic projects provide high quality habitat for fish and wildlife and also generate tangible and intangible economic benefits for ranchers, farmers, recreational and commercial fishers, and other stream users. Restored streambeds, riparian habitats, and shorelines reduce the amount of undesirable runoff reaching our rivers and streams, slow down floodwaters, and enhance wildlife corridors for migratory species making these projects among the most cost effective.

Candidate Species Conservation Pilot - In FY 2007, the Service will initiate a pilot venture to determine whether the Service's Partners Program and the Service's Candidate Conservation Program can improve operational efficiencies by identifying and implementing voluntary habitat restoration projects which will benefit listing candidates. This project has the potential to increase internal and external attention on the conservation of candidate species. The Candidate Conservation Program has information on the status of candidate species and can identify those species that are declining due to habitat loss and those species that have habitat restoration goals. The Partners Program has the expertise to find, design, and complete voluntary habitat restoration projects on private lands, and can attract outside funds to leverage its non-regulatory approach to habitat restoration.

This pilot venture will be developed in two areas in order to develop a more integrated approach to problem solving and to find management efficiencies. The first is the identification and sharing of species and geographic information already developed by the programs. This will coordinate the databases that already exist through the Service's Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS). ECOS is a web-based system that provides access to data modules for the Endangered Species programs and the Fisheries and Habitat Conservation programs. ECOS provides a central point of access to assist Service personnel across the nation in managing data and information as well as provides general public access to information from numerous Service databases. Geographic information available through ECOS and other partners will be made accessible to other Service programs. This information will include geographic location of current habitat restoration efforts being implemented by the Partners Program and the Candidate Conservation Program.

The second part of this pilot initiative is to analyze these data and 1) identify those priority candidate species for which habitat restoration projects would benefit; and 2) identify specific acreage goals that would preclude the need to list the species. With this information, the Partners Program will focus resources and outside interest on restoration projects in specific geographic focus areas.

Cooperative Conservation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Because the conservation provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (i.e., 2002 Farm Bill) will expire at the end of FY 2007, the Partners Program will work at the national, regional, state and local levels with our partners to identify the fish and wildlife benefits of the Farm Bill conservation programs and document the importance of Farm Bill programs to achieving conservation goals for federal trust species. The Partners program staff will work with federal, state and other partners to identify opportunities to use Farm Bill conservation programs for stream restoration and other aquatic habitat restoration projects identified through the National Fish Habitat Initiative.

Improving accountability and efficiency– Accountability is an essential responsibility of all government programs and historically, the Partners Program has reported accomplishments in terms of acres and miles of wetlands, uplands, riparian lands and streams restored. These accomplishments are recorded by field project managers in our Habitat Information Tracking System (HabITS) database; however, new and expanded accountability standards are emerging. While acres and miles of habitat restored remain central to measuring program accomplishments, we must seek ways to measure our activities in order to insure that our habitat restoration actions are producing measurable contributions to the federal trust species.

Initially, we will describe the value or contribution of our projects to the quantitative goals of existing, peer-reviewed conservation plans that have already identified expected benefits from conservation actions in specific geographical areas. Linking our efforts to these existing plans will assist in measuring anticipated biological responses to or benefits of our actions. In FY 2006, a GIS-based landscape planning tool is being tested in HabITS which will allow us to tie our focus areas to existing national conservation plans (e.g., Waterbirds Conservation Plan.). HabITS will be a critical tool used to plan for and track FY 2007 accomplishments. We will share and coordinate our habitat restoration information with other Service programs and partners so it could be used as part of species population status and trends analyses.

The applicability and success of HabITS goes beyond the US Fish and Wildlife Service and directly support the Administration's E-Government initiative. For example, other federal agencies, such as the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration are using HabITS as a model for the development of a national database to report and monitor coastal habitat restoration projects, helping in the coordination and collaboration between the Service and its partners. HabITS has the potential to become a powerful public outreach tool.

Examples of voluntary habitat restoration projects that may be funded in FY 2007:

- **Olaa-Kilauea Partnership, Hawaii:** The Partners Program will work with state, federal and private landowners in a cooperative land management effort involving 500,000 acres of some of the best quality forest types remaining in Hawaii. The partnership area is important habitat for five species of endangered forest birds, the Hawaiian goose, the Hawaiian hoary bat, 12 endangered plant species and Blackburn's sphinx moth. The projects will focus on removing or reducing impacts from feral animals, alien plants and non-native predators and restoring native habitat and rare and endangered species through propagation and planting. Potential partners include the landowners, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Forest Service, University of Hawaii, The Nature Conservancy, Hawaii Department of Education and the U.S. Army.
- **Big Lake Watershed, Alaska:** The Partners Program will work with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Big Lake Community Council, The Nature Conservancy, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association,

local watershed groups, and private landowners to develop and implement a resource management and restoration plan for the Big Lake Watershed. The Big Lake drainage, one of the fastest growing population areas in Alaska, includes more than 300 stream miles of key habitat for five species of pacific salmon and supports important recreational, commercial, and subsistence fisheries. The Service is currently collaborating with local government and private landowners to identify resource concerns and management needs and in FY 2007, the project will restore stream habitats and fish passage to 20 miles of salmon spawning and rearing habitat.

- Lake Champlain Watershed, New York and Vermont: The Partners Program will work with several agencies and organizations, including the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife, New York State Department of Conservation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Lake Champlain Basin Program, and multiple local watershed conservation groups to restore 15 miles of riparian habitat, 200 acres of wetlands, and 150 acres of upland habitat in the Lake Champlain watershed. The projects will restore rare and uncommon natural communities such as Valley Clay Plain Forest and Riverine Floodplain Forest. Species benefited include the federally-listed Indiana bat; several species of State-listed freshwater mussels and Atlantic salmon.

2006 Planned Program Performance

In FY 2006, the program will continue to establish scientifically-supported, collaboratively established focus areas to deliver its financial and technical assistance. As recommended in the PART review (Section II, Strategic Planning, Question 7), the Partners Program through the Service's well-organized infrastructure and a staff strategically operating in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, the program is complementing its trust species responsibilities with local conservation efforts to maximize benefits.

Project examples include:

- Restoration activities at the Sandhills region of north-central Nebraska will enhance this wetland-grassland ecosystem in a way that sustains profitable private ranching, wildlife and vegetative diversity, and associated water supplies. The Sandhills, the largest contiguous tract of grassland remaining in the U.S., provides valuable habitat for waterbirds, shorebirds, and wading birds. Native grass seedings, rotational grazing systems, and wetland and stream restoration will jointly benefit tall-to-mid-grass prairie conservation, grassland nesting bird species, waterbirds and sustainable ranching communities. Over 30,000 acres of upland grasses, 5,000 acres of riparian habitat, 5,000 acres of wetlands and wet meadows, and over 15 miles of streams and rivers will be positively impacted through a wide variety of partnerships with the Sandhills Task Force, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nebraska Cattlemen, Inc., National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Natural Resources Districts, and more than 25 ranching families.
- Conasauga River Streambed Restoration, Georgia: The Conasauga River (a priority under the National Fish Habitat Initiative) is ranked 8th in the nation in terms of freshwater diversity and has been identified as a biodiversity "hot spot" critical for the conservation of aquatic fauna, including three federally-listed fish species and nine listed species of mussels. This project will focus on the restoration and protection on private lands of a forest corridor in riparian and floodplain areas in the watershed; the use of innovative natural channel design methodologies for stream channel restoration and bank stabilization; and, removal of barriers within tributary

streams. Partners include the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, USDA's NRCS and Farm Service Agency, U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the Sand County Foundation's Aldo Leopold Trust Fund.

- Willapa Bay *Spartina* Control, Washington: This project involves the control and eradication of *Spartina alterniflora* from Willapa Bay in order to restore and protect valuable habitat for a variety of shorebirds, numerous anadromous fish species and oyster and hard-shell clam habitat essential to the region's aquaculture industry. Partners include the Washington State Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Wildlife, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association, Coastal Resources Alliance, and Willapa Water Resources Council.
- Milnesand Lesser Prairie Chicken Habitat Restoration, New Mexico: Habitat restoration and grazing management will restore high-quality habitat for the lesser prairie chickens (candidate conservation species) and improve habitat for migratory grassland-nesting birds.

Resource Protection: Improve Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resources	FY 2005 Actual^{1/}	FY 2006 Planned^{2/}
Acres of wetland habitat restored	42,863 ac	26,909 ac
Acres of upland habitat restored	348,362 ac	247,665 ac
Miles of riparian and/or stream habitat restored	660 mi	581 mi
Sustain biological communities.		
Acres treated to control invasive species	67,242 ac	60,283 ac
Acres treated to control nutria	20,396 ac	3,800 ac
Other performance measures:		
Number of fish passage barriers removed	95	198
Wetland acres opened to fish access	---	144 ac
Miles of stream opened to fish access	---	152 mi
Number of landowner agreements	2,744	2,500

¹ The actual accomplishments for FY 2005 greatly exceeded our expectations due to highly successful leveraging of funds with our partners. Planned activities for FY 2006 are based on assumptions of normal levels of leveraging.

² The "Acres treated to control invasive species" includes upland and wetland acres. The number is reported as a single number to track with the funding sub-category "Invasive Species Control – General Base and DOI Strategic Plan performance measures."

2005 Program Performance Accomplishments

In FY 2005, the Partners Program focused its efforts on activities that support the Resource Protection goal within the Department's strategic plan. Specifically, the program supports the twin goals of "Improve Health of Watersheds, Landscapes, and Marine Resource" and "Sustaining Biological Communities."

Some examples of these activities include:

- In Texas, the program worked with Temple-Inland Forests to restore and manage 3,000 acres of upland longleaf pine-bluestem savannah habitat on corporate private land. The project goal was the management of existing and currently occupied red-cockaded woodpecker habitat and restoration of longleaf pine savannah. These management actions will benefit the Louisiana pine snake (candidate species), the white firewheel, slender gay-feather, scarlet catchfly, along many other species.
- In Montana, the Program assisted the Arrowhead Land and Livestock Company with grazing management improvements that included enhancement of seven miles of riparian habitat and 1,200 acres of sagebrush and native grassland habitat in the first phase of a multi-year project. Improved water quality, reduced water temperatures, and increased flows in a tributary to the Big Hole River will benefit fluvial Arctic grayling (native fish), sage grouse and other migratory birds.
- In Michigan, the Service is working with Ducks Unlimited, National Audubon Society, Presque Isle Electric and Gas, Thunder Bay Power and Huron Pines Resource Conservation and Development to reduce the adverse impacts of the invasive Eurasian watermilfoil (aquatic plant) on the Fletcher Floodwater, an 8,600-acre impoundment in the Thunder Bay River Watershed. The floodwater is home to yellow perch, northern pike, pan fish, the second largest osprey population in the midwest, nesting eagles and loons and serves as a waterfowl resting area. In recent years, the floodwater has become inundated with milfoil which has reduced the size and number of fishery populations and dramatically disrupted the aquatic ecosystem. In July of 2005, the partners pooled resources to contract the assessment, monitoring and release of 15,000 native milfoil-eating weevils into the floodwater. The lake will be monitored for the next three years to determine the effects of the weevils.

Program Performance Overview: Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Measure: Acres achieving desired condition.	2005 Plan	2005 Actual	Change from 2005 Plan	2006 Enacted	2006 Change from 2005 Actual	2007 Request	2007 Change from 2006
Wetland acres							
Partners Fish & Wildlife	26,175	42,319	16,144	26,159	-16,160	26,432	273
Klamath Basin	350	500	150	750	250	1,600	850
Grizzly Bear Recovery	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
Gray Wolf	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
High Plains Partnership	200	44	-156	0	-44	--	--
Total	26,725	42,863	16,138	26,909	-15,954	28,032	1,123
Upland acres							
Partners Fish & Wildlife	182,100	330,026	147,926	247,290	-82,736	249,762	2,472
Klamath Basin	250	0	-250	375	375	437	62
Grizzly Bear Recovery	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
Gray Wolf	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
High Plains Partnership	6,800	18,336	11,536	0	-18,336	0	0
Total	189,150	348,362	159,212	247,665	-100,697	250,199	6,977
Stream & Riparian Miles							
Partners Fish & Wildlife	386	657	+271	581	-76	529	-52
Klamath Basin	11	3	-8	20	-3	39	+39
Grizzly Bear Recovery	0	--	0	--	0	0	0
Gray Wolf	--	--	--	--	--	0	0
High Plains Partnership	0	0	0	0	0	--	--
Total	397	660	+263	581	-79	568	-13
Number of fish passage barriers removed.							
Partners Fish & Wildlife	28	89	61	45	-44	45	0
Klamath Basin	6	6	0	5	-1	1	-4
Grizzly Bear Recovery	0	--	0	0	0	0	0
Gray Wolf	--	0	0	--	--	0	0
High Plains Partnership	0	--	--	--	0	--	--
Total	34	51	61	45	-45	46	+1
Acres treated for invasive species.							
Partners Fish & Wildlife	83,332	67,242	-16,090	60,283	450	60,733	+450
Nutria	2,000	20,396	18,396	3,800	-16,596	1,000	-2,800
Total	85,332	87,638	-2,306	64,083	-23,509	61,733	-2,800